

REMARKS

Claims 16-22 remain pending in the above-referenced application and are submitted for the Examiner's consideration.

Claims 16-19, 21, and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,351,041 to Ikata et al. ("Ikata"). A claim is anticipated under Section 102 only if every limitation in the claim is identically found in a single prior art reference. Ikata teaches that the slave units upon initialisation send a connection confirmation request information (information message) to the master unit. However, this document does not teach that the content of a corresponding non-volatile memory is actualized every time a change occurs in the application status of the slave, as in claim 16. In other words, the slave unit according to Ikata always transmit the same information message in order to announce their presence to the master. In claim 16, it is specified that every change in the application status of the "slave" causes a change of the information message. Moreover, Ikata does not specify how normal operation in step S5 is effected. In claim 16, the step of coordinating is initiated by the master based on the received updated application status. In the system of Ikata, this is not possible, because the master does not know the updated application status, but only knows the simple connection confirmation request information. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Ikata does not anticipate claim 16 or any of the dependent claims in this rejection.

Moreover, even if the Examiner decides to maintain the rejection of claim 16, Applicants submit that the subject matter of amended claim 19 is neither taught nor suggested by Ikata or any other reference relied on by the Examiner.

As for the other prior art rejection, since the additional art relied on in this rejection (Mutoh) does not overcome the deficiencies noted above with respect to Ikata, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested as well.

It is respectfully submitted that the subject matter of the present application is new, non-obvious, and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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